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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 8349  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 0152  
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ PRIORITY 0132  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 0135  
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO PRIORITY 0149  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000117

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DOE FOR GPERSON, CGAY  
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS  
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS  
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR FLISER  
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART  
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT  
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2017  
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EPET](#) [PTER](#) [ENERG](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT OBASANJO AVERTS OIL SECTOR STRIKE

REF: 06 LAGOS 1230

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) Summary: President Obasanjo averted an oil sector strike on February 8 by assuring unions the GON would seek to improve security in the Niger Delta, according to Executive Secretary of Nigeria's Ministry of Labor and Productivity,

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Timiebi Koripamo-Agary. Peter Akpatason, President of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), told Poloff on February 8 President Obasanjo was "quite reassuring" and supported the formation of a workgroup to provide the government recommendations for security in the Niger Delta. The February 8 meeting was convened after oil sector unions threatened an oil production strike in protest of the government's failure to provide safe working conditions in the Delta. End Summary.

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OBASANJO AVERTS OIL PRODUCTION STRIKE  
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12. (C) On February 8 President Obasanjo met representatives of oil sector unions, international oil companies, State Security Service (SSS), Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Petroleum Resources to address Niger Delta security, the Executive Secretary of Nigeria's Ministry of Labor and Productivity, Timiebi Koripamo-Agary told Poloff. The President assured union leaders government would continue to improve security in the Niger Delta, Koripamo-Agary reported. Obasanjo highlighted the Presidential Masterplan for the Social and Economic Development of the Coastal States of

Nigeria as a pillar of his efforts. Koripamo-Agary commented the meeting went well, especially since union leaders could now tell their members they presented the workers' concerns directly to President Obasanjo, the "father of the nation."

¶3. (C) Prior to the meeting, Peter Esele, President of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), told Poloff local branch members of PENGASSAN and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) were prepared to enact a "full blown strike" in protest of the government's failure to secure working conditions in the Niger Delta.

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OBASANJO SUPPORTS WORKGROUP; UNION EXPECTS LITTLE CHANGE  
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¶4. (C) NUPENG President Peter Akpatason also attended the meeting with President Obasanjo. Akpatason told Poloff President Obasanjo listened to the unions' grievances and was "quite reassuring" about what the government would do to address their concerns. Akpatason said Obasanjo supported the idea of a working group to suggest ways the government could improve Niger Delta security, he recounted. Despite the President's support for the working group, Akpatason remained wary of this due to the government's reputation for making empty promises. Akpatason candidly commented he did not expect the government to take substantial steps to improve the Niger Delta.

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COMMENT  
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¶5. (C) PENGASSAN and NUPENG have long decried the deteriorating working environment of the Niger Delta; the President's latest assurances fit assurances made in the past. However, not much resulted from these earlier meetings

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and committees. It is improbable that much will be derived from this one. However, the meeting did have utility as a face-saving mechanism for the union leaders. By saying they had the ear of President Obasanjo and he heard their plea, they can now retreat from the threatened strike--for the time being. Thus, it is likely that talk of a strike will not resurface for several weeks or months to come. End Comment.  
BROWNE